

the nature and design of the Lord's Supper.

.....
CONSIDERED, *4476.aa-107*

IN

A S E R M O N,

P R E A C H E D .

AT

L I V E R P O O L,

Jan. 22d, 1792.

K
BY THOMAS TAYLOR.

This do in remembrance of me. Luke xxii. 19.

Examine yourselves. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

SECOND EDITION.

*his probatio divina ad divinæ Scripturæ normam exigenda
pari ratione etiam hæc, quam requirit Paulus.*

GERH. MEDIT.

E. JOHNSON, PRINT. CASTLE-STREET.



A SERMON,

On 1 Cor. xi. 28.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup:

GOD made man upright; but they, his posterity, have sought out many inventions: and of these, abusing his divine institutions not the least hurtful. That this was the case with the Jews of old, is very clear, both in the old and new testament. Either they were gone away from his ordinances and had not kept them,* or otherwise they had perverted them, and turned them to empty formalities.† Hence the Lord makes frequent complaints by his prophets, and often intended to very little purpose; for they were determined to follow the imaginations of their own hearts. We find the same stupid, self-conceitedness continued in our Saviour's time, insomuch that old customs and senseless traditions were set up instead of obedience to the words of their Redeemer; thus making the word of God of none effect that they might keep their empty traditions. This was the case in the primitive church at a very early period, even while the apostles were yet alive, as appears from the chapter before us; and hence the solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper was abused by the Corinthians who were grown wise in their own conceit, yea wiser than their teachers, to the great loss of purity and gospel simplicity; the present day marks out the same evils unto us. Millions are most avowed infidels, and reject every thing sacred and divine. And among such as pay some regard to the things of God, we see much stupid bigotry,

A 2 and

* Mal. iii. 7. † Isaiah. i. 13, 14. chap. lviii. 3.—6.

and little heavenly understanding, and less genuine love. Numbers are almost ready to fight in maintaining some obsolete form, some unscriptural tradition, to the destruction, the utter destruction of mercy and the love of God.

Many, very many are the abuses we find of sacred things, even now, and that shocking profanation of the Lord's Supper is not one of the least. Improper persons administer it, improper persons receive it; such as are shamefully ignorant of its nature, and such as are a disgrace to religion in their lives. People are often urged to go to Sacrament, as 'tis called, yea it is often carried to persons just dying, to be their sure passport no doubt, while ignorant of the real design of that blessed institution. —To attempt a remedy in this case, is the design of the present discourse; and let me entreat your calm and candid attention, while I endeavour to explain and enforce the advice in the text: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.*

From hence it may be proper to consider,

First, For what ends we may eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Secondly, Let a man examine himself whether these holy ends be answered in him.

I. First, then, for what ends are we *to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup?*

1. That we may profess our faith and confidence in the Saviour of the world; and herein evidence that we belong to him, owning and avowing him to be our Lord and Redeemer; also acknowledging that we take him for our prophet, priest, and king, for our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; so that we acknowledge no salvation

in any other, well knowing that there is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved but the name of Jesus. So that we "renounce our own, both righteous and unrighteous deeds, and live in him transplanted, and from him receive new life." Therefore "we do not presume to approach his table trusting in our own righteousness, but in his manifold mercies" manifested in dying for us upon the cross,

"He sunk beneath our heavy woes,

"To raise us to his throne ;

"There's not a gift his hand bestows,

"But cost his heart a groan."

In him is life to the dead, strength to the weak, rest to the weary, and pardon to the guilty : this we announce to all the world by eating of that bread and drinking of that cup.

2. We call to mind his death and passion, which gives satisfaction to that justice which we have offended, that law which we had broken, and thereby had brought ourselves under the curse, seeing it is written, *Cursed is the man who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.** But the eating of that broken bread, and drinking of that wine poured out, plainly point unto that sacred body, rent and torn for our offences ; that precious blood shed to make reconciliation for transgression : there we see him *wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, that by his stripes we might be healed. †* Amazing spectacle ! Amazing mystery ! Astonishing wonder ! Here is justice demonstrated, here is justice satisfied ! Here is love stronger than death. Here is redemption from the curses of the law, from the sword of justice, from the wrath of God, from the guilt and

A 3

power,

* Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10. † Isaiah liii. 5.

power, and nature of sin; yea, from the power of the grave and from everlasting damnation! O 'tis Christ crucified! To the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to all that believe, Christ the power of God, and Christ the wisdom of God.

" 'Tis myst'ry all: th' Immortal dies!

" Who can explore his strange design?

" In vain the first born seraph tries

" To sound the depths of love divine:

" 'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,

" Let angel minds enquire no more."

It is an amazing instance of human depravity that we need a means of this sort, to perpetuate the memory of so important a transaction; but at the same time it shews the amazing importance of the atonement made upon the cross; and in this striking ordinance we set forth the Lord's death until he come: thus should we discern the Lord's body, nailed to the cross, and taking away the sins of the world. Can any thing in the world render sin more odious, or the world more contemptible, than our incarnate Jehovah making his soul an offering for sin, expiring in tremendous agonies upon the cross?

3. By eating of that bread, and drinking of that cup, we call our sins to remembrance, a very unpleasant meditation, but yet a necessary one, and what we find holy men were often engaged in. And it seems the great annual atonement under the law was to answer that end, and therefore the apostle says, *But in those sacrifices, there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.* * And if that shadowy ordinance was to call sins to remembrance, much more this standing memorial, which testifies that Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust to bring us to God. Here then we are called

* Heb. x. 3,

to look back, and trace it to its polluted fountain. Thus we may see that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners—that through the offence of one, judgment is come upon all men to condemnation; so that we were shapen in iniquity, and in sin conceived. Having heard of him by the hearing of the ear, now the believer's eye sees him, and seeing him abhors himself in dust and ashes. Can any thing shew the malignity of sin like the amazing offering for sin? And shall not that feeling sensibility drive us to the fountain open for sin and uncleanness? to that blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel? Some tell us, that St. Peter could never hear a cock crow, without weeping; it bringing to him such a keen remembrance of the sin of denying his Lord and Master. We often find David mourning like a dove, and deploring in bitter sighs and deep groans, his past sins and follies. It was this painful reflection which brought that blessed declaration from St. Paul's heart and pen, *It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.* * Precious saying! Worthy of all acceptation indeed! How well is it for us that there was a Paul, and that he felt himself a sinner? That has made him so amazingly skilful in pointing to the sinner's only refuge. This is a needful qualification in all the ministers of the gospel, I mean a heart felt acquaintance with themselves and their Saviour; thus while we view and receive the symbols of our Saviour's broken body, should not the remembrance of our sin be grievous and the burthen of it intolerable to bear? Yes, our feeling cry should be

“ Ah,

" Ah, give me, Lord, my sins to mourn ;
 " My sins, which have thy body torn ;
 " Give me with broken heart to see
 " Thy last tremendous agony ;
 " To weep o'er an expiring God,
 " And mix my sorrows with thy blood. "

O my fellow sinner, let thy pride, anger, lust, love to the world, unbelief, and in a word, a nature so polluted that it is altogether as an unclean thing, and thy very righteousness as filthy rags, I say, let all this be written if possible in tears of blood ! Yea and even let that blood be washed in the blood of thy dear Saviour ! But then, let the abhorrence of thy sin be manifested in forsaking of it ; don't let thy confessing sin be a plea for living in it. Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound ? God forbid. No, let the time past suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles. Surely you cannot indulge that which hath so mangled, rent and torn the Lamb of God ! Surely you cry out

" 'Twere you my sins, my cruel sins,
 " His chief tormentors were ;
 " Each of my crimes became a nail,
 " And unbelief the spear.

We eat that bread, and drink that cup in remembrance that Christ died for us, and thereby strengthen our faith in him. But then, it is necessary to observe, that we must have faith in him. I fear a grievous mistake lies here ; and that is, many think they have faith who have it not ; that they draw a false conclusion from false premises : Many conclude themselves believers because they have been baptized, and because they give their assent to the being of a God, and some other articles which they have been accustomed to hear. And I fear the ceremony of baptism is adopted instead of regeneration. And I think the established form gives

too much encouragement for this conjecture ; only attend unto it. “ We yield thee hearty thanks, “ most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to “ regenerate *this infant* with thy Holy Spirit, to “ receive *him* for thine own *child* by adoption, and “ to incorporate *him* into thy holy church.” The same dreadful error is confirmed in the Catechism. “ Who gave you this name ? My godfathers and “ godmothers, in my baptism, wherein I was made “ a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” Now let any reasonable man consider this, and is it any wonder that so many thousands are resting without faith when they are thus taught, yea, confirmed herein ? What is a fundamental error if this be not ? This makes me say, we must have real faith before we can increase therein. But what is faith ? I answer, *The substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* * But does repeating a few words, perhaps by an ungodly man, and throwing a little water in the face of a child make it a believer ? Surely *that* faith is the gift of man, and not the gift of God. With this pitiful fancy many deceive themselves, crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace ; no peace with God, nor properly speaking with their own consciences. However we know that we are justified by faith, and have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now where true faith is, there is true hope, and love, yea every grace of the Spirit ; and to strengthen this faith, the death of its divine object is set forth as evidently crucified, so that we “ take, and eat, in remembrance that Christ died for us, and we feed upon “ him by faith with thanksgiving.” O, we need this sensible refreshment ! Life is filled with many,

very

* Heb. xi. 1.

very many, trials, sharp and strong, which are calculated to weigh down and depress the inner man, and surely to discourage the servants of God in their way to Zion; and therefore if we mean to keep our head above water there must be a constant looking to Jesus the author, till he become the finisher of our faith: the saints overcome the great red dragon by the blood of the Lamb; that is, by faith in that blood, and so must we, seeing we have the same red dragon to combat with. Human nature is frail and stands in need of divine support, and if the soul is alive to God it feels that need, and where is it to be found but in Jesus? *I am*, says he, *the bread of life; the bread which came down from heaven; he that eats of this bread shall live for ever.* Here is the true nourishment of a never dying soul, by which it is strengthened in its warfare; and this is what is particularly held out in the Lord's Supper.

5. The eating of that bread, and drinking of that cup is a token of our communion with Christ and fellowship one with another. Herein is neither Jew nor Greek, male or female, bond or free, but we are all one in Christ Jesus. *The cup of blessing, which we bless, which we pray for a blessing upon, and for which we give thanks, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.* * *For know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.* † The visible church on earth is an organized body, in which every pillar, or officer, hath its appointed place, as also every stone or member; and care is to be taken that every mem-

* 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. † chap. xii. 27.

ber, and every officer be fit for their place. As St. Peter says, *Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.—But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* * The nineteenth article is a very proper definition of the church of Christ, and a very clear proof that the national church, as a body, is not the church of Christ. Take special notice of the words. “The visible church of Christ is a con-

gregation of *faithful men*, in which the *pure word* of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to *Christ's ordinance* in all those things that of necessity belong to the same.”

Now I ask any sensible, candid man, who has read his bible, and a little of church history, and thought thereon. Is this the case with the established church? Where is that particular assembly of them, what parish church throughout the kingdom, where the communicants are a congregation of *faithful men*, and where the *pure word* of God is preached, and where the sacraments are duly administered, according to *Christ's ordinance*? Is that minister a faithful man, that is, one that has faith in Christ, and faithful in his duty, who will hunt, play cards, go to plays, horse races, balls, and assemblies; who is a pot companion with the men of the world? I think few will say he is. Then here is a flaw in the chief pillar. Surely this unfaithful shepherd will have an unfaithful flock. The old adage will be verified, *Like people, like priest.* † Or can we think those faithful men who go to the Lord's table purely to be qualified for a place in the revenue, or

* 1 Pet. ii. 5.—9. † Hos. iv. 9.

a commission in the army, or some other honourable or lucrative office? Or such as can curse and swear, or accompany their compliant vicar or curate in their scenes of folly. Or can we say the gospel is purely preached where Christ is scarcely named; but where a phantom called reason, is put in the place of Christ, faith or the new birth? Will you call that, the gospel, which frequently ridicules experimental religion under odious names, such as enthusiasm, fanaticism, insanity and the like? Has not this christless preaching well nigh made most of those structures called churches heathen temples? Where does our Lord authorize such men to preach such doctrine? Nay, does he not forbid them? (*Psalm* l. 16.) Does he not say, *I sent them not, nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people faith the Lord.* * Can there be any communion with either people or preacher of this stamp? What communion hath light with darkness, or he that believeth with an infidel? With such, the apostle says, *no, not eat.* †

But there is a communion, a divine fellowship, with the children of God, begotten of the same Father, and born of the same Spirit, bearing the same yoke, and fighting against the same enemies, enlisted under the same banner, and travelling to the same country; and all living upon the same bread of life, that bread which came down from heaven, the flesh of the Son of Man which is meat indeed, and that blood which is drink indeed, being all partakers of that one bread of which this ordinance is a sacred emblem. Herein they can set their amen to that solemn prayer, “that they
“all may be one, as thou Father *art* in me and I
“in thee; that they also may be ONE IN US.” ‡

* *Jer.* xxiii. 32. † *1 Cor.* v. 11. ‡ *John* xxiii. 21. If

If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. *

6. In eating that bread, and drinking that cup, we profess to give up ourselves entirely to him who died for us. For we are not our own, we are bought with a price; and therefore are called to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are the Lord's. And certainly this would be virtually done if we were quite silent, but it is formally done, by every communicant in the church of England, in as solemn words as can be. Hence we find them using these striking expressions, "And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee, that all we who are partakers of this holy communion may be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction."

In words we cannot be more express, or speak more to the purpose, and draw a very weighty obligation upon ourselves, and thereby bind ourselves by a most awful vow, to be entirely devoted unto the Lord. Not only so, but in some respects we call upon the celestial host to witness for or against us in the same, saying, "Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name; evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee O Lord most high. Amen." If this be the language of the heart it will be seen in the life; but if otherwise, what words can sufficiently describe the perfidy and hypocrisy of such a procedure? Yea such an one condemns himself with his own mouth, and calls angels and

archangels to witness against himself. We engage to take up our cross and follow a despised master. The breach is made up, and we ratify the solemn treaty by sitting at his table and eating and drinking in remembrance that Christ died for us, and we feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving. Such are the blessed ends of this divine ordinance.

II. It is now time to attend to the second thing proposed, namely, the qualifications which are necessary in all who are willing to communicate profitably, and here the text says, *Let a man examine himself*. Examine himself! How weighty, and yet how hard! But what is the rule by which he is to examine? the bible, undoubtedly, the only and sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice.

To be a little particular here. 1. It is necessary that he should examine his own knowledge of divine things. I don't mean that he should be nice and critical in religious matters; our needful knowledge, like our needful food, lies very open to every honest enquirer; and though the things of God are deep and mysterious, yet, where there is sincerity, and gospel simplicity, God will not leave such an one in the dark; his Spirit will guide him into all truth, and if needs be he shall not want an outward teacher. We find an honest eunuch, a man of figure and dignity, reading his bible, though sitting in his chariot, perhaps glad to catch the quiet season for that purpose. It is plain his understanding of divine things was but dark, for though he was reading that remarkable chapter, the fifty-third of Isaiah, yet he did not know of whom the prophet was speaking, whether *of himself or of some other*; but having an ear for divine instruction, God sent him a teacher, *who preached Jesus unto him from*
that

that very chapter, and not in vain, for he believed in him of whom he heard; was baptized and went on his way rejoicing.* Another instance of the same kind we see in Cornelius, the centurion, who was an honest seeker into divine truth, and as he was fasting and praying for heavenly wisdom, an angel is sent to him, who orders him to send for Peter *who should declare unto him what he ought to do.*† We see how God honours the messengers of the gospel. The angel might have told Cornelius what was left for Peter to do; but we see God is pleased to honour a gospel ministry, and use ministers of his own appointing—that though the wise and prudent reject the things of eternity, yet are they revealed unto babes; for so it seemeth good to the Father of mercies. This leading branch of knowledge is very humbling; it is such a discovery of a man to himself as stains the pride of all his glory and lays his honour in the dust, in that he feels himself full of wounds and bruises and putrifying sores; and the more he knows of himself the greater cause he feels to be humbled in dust and ashes. Indeed the human heart, with the manifold turnings and windings of iniquity found therein, may be compared to the prophet Ezekiel's chambers of imagery; for no sooner had he beheld one group of abominations, but it was said unto him, *turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.*‡ Thus he sees the doctrine of the fall, or rather feels it in his own poor diseased soul, and it exactly tallies with what he reads in the book of God. He reads *For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lascivi-*

B 2

ousness,

* Acts viii. 26.—40. † x. 3, 4, 5. ‡ Ezek. viii.

ousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

It is equally necessary for him to know that he cannot save himself, and that by the righteous law of God he is doomed to die everlastingly; that he cannot redeem his soul, or give to God a ransom for either himself or his brother. § That the Ethiopian can as soon change his black skin, or the Leopard his spots, as that he who is accustomed to do evil should learn to do well. He must then enquire in what light he views his Saviour, or what his ideas may be of redemption by the blood of an incarnate God. Does he consider that it is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, that Jesus trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there were none with him; and that by the blood of his covenant alone the prisoners shall be brought out of the pit in which there is no water? Has he a clear scriptural view of all the offices which Christ sustains, as prophet, priest, and king? Does he see him as the way, the truth and the life? The only way for a poor ruined sinner to come to God? Has he a tolerable idea of the dignity of his person, that the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in him, that all things were made by him, and without him nothing was made? So that without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. Has he a proper conception of justification by faith, faith in that blood which was shed for ruined and undone sinners, and by which their sins are fully expiated? Now this kind of knowledge a man may obtain who hears the gospel and is simple hearted, though he be no scholar; nay, though he cannot read a letter, so that if he perishes for lack of knowledge it is his own fault.

2. He should examine his repentance. If it is true that all have sinned, then it is equally true that all need repentance. And indeed so we are told, *For at the times of ignorance God winked; but now hath commanded all men every where to repent.* Now wherever there is real repentance there will be sincere sorrow for sin, according to the degree of sensibility the penitent feels, and that is a sacrifice well pleasing to God; for the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart God will not despise. Whatever depth of sorrow there may be in the penitent, we are very certain he will forsake his sin; he will "not dissemble or cloak it before the face of Almighty God;" for he that covereth his sin shall not prosper; but he that *confesseth and forsaketh his sin, he shall obtain mercy.* He must, in the very nature of things, forsake his sin: for his servants we are to whom we obey, whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness. He cannot serve two masters. If he sincerely seeks Jesus he will let his sins go. He will deliver up his pleasing sins; the pleasure of them is gone; he is bound to that wherein he was held, and is led captive by it no more. He will sacrifice his profitable sins, his sinful gain: he cannot pursue that which he knows the word of God condemns. And if there be any honour or credit in dishonouring the Most High, he humbly lays it at the foot of the cross, so that he may count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Saviour and Lord.

3. But the sincere communicant must examine his faith; seeing without faith we cannot please God; and the lowest degree is, *that he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and is the rewarder of all them who diligently seek him.*† But this is only the

* Acts xvii. † Heb. xi. 6.

faith of an heathen, thus far he believes. But the faith of a christian must behold *God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* * He must behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Christ was lift up on the cross, like the brazen serpent upon the pole, and now he is elevated upon the gospel pole, *that whosoever believeth in him may not perish but have everlasting life.* † For all things were written and done, *that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and in believing we might have life through his name.* ‡ Now let the communicant examine what confidence he has in that adorable Redeemer, whether he cordially receives him for his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Dost thou believe him an able Saviour? Dost thou believe him a willing Saviour? Dost thou renounce not only thy sins, but dost thou renounce thine own righteousness too? Canst thou feelingly say,

“ Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,

“ My beauty are, my glorious dress;

“ 'Midst flaming worlds in these array'd,

“ With joy shall I lift up my head ! ”

Dost thou hear him call the weary and the heavy laden to come to him; and that such as come he will in no wise cast out? Art thou then looking up to him now? Does not that bread, now broken, as a finger, point to thy Saviour, broken upon the cross for thee, and crush'd beneath the load of thy numerous offences? O look! look at that awful agony! See that amazing sufferer! Harken to that most doleful cry, My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me! Once again, I say look; see blood and sweat, flow mingled down! O my sins! my cruel sins! what have ye done! O what love! O what sorrow!

* 2 Cor. v. 19. † John iii. 15. ‡ John xx. 31.

sorrow ! Sorrow and love mingled together ! Rent, rent hard heart ! give way thou cursed unbelief ! " Heaven weeps that man may smile ! Heaven bleeds that man may never die ! " Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest thus be mindful of him ! O let thy dying love constrain the outcasts to come in, and let my worthless heart abide in thee for ever.

4. But it is highly necessary that the believer should examine his frame and temper, when he eats that bread and drinks that cup ; for while he commemorates the death of his meek and lowly Saviour, Should not the same blessed mind be in him which was also in Christ Jesus ? Should not he be a rich partaker of all the passive graces of the divine Spirit, and become the true imitator of him who hath left him the brightest example ? who did no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered he threatened not ? The term Lamb, so frequently given to our Saviour, is not only figurative of the atonement which he made, but also expressive of his holy, harmless nature ; we scarce know any animal more inoffensive than a lamb ; true emblem of the precious Lamb of God. And is not that the very appellation which he gives to all his followers ? they are in many places termed sheep, and he is called their Shepherd ; * and in some places they are termed lambs. † Now should not these sheep, these lambs express that very nature of which their names should be an emblem ? Most certainly they ought ; yes, to *lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisy and envies, and all evil speakings. As new-born babes to desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby, seeing they have tasted that the*

Lord

* Psalm xxiii. 1.—xxx. 1.—Ezek. xxxiv.—John x.

† Isaiah xl, 10.—John xxi. 15.

Lord is gracious. They should put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. Above all put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. Thus also should the peace of God rule in their hearts so that they may be thankful. Such tempers clearly shew to whom we belong, and into what Spirit we are baptized, a clear manifestation whose image and superscription we bear.

5. If we are conscious of giving any just occasion of offence, of injuring any one in word or deed, there should be a readiness to acknowledge the offence and also to put it away. While we are receiving the blessed seal of our pardon there must not be a continuing of the offence, well knowing that our blessed Saviour came not to save us in our sins, but to save us from them. Or if we have received any injury or offence there should be a readiness to forgive. Bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. Thus may you evidence yourselves to be the children of your Father who is in heaven. Then if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink, so shalt thou heap coals of fire on his head.

6. We are called to examine what our intentions may be: how we intend to demean ourselves for the future. If we profess to dedicate ourselves to God in that divine ordinance, in what manner do we intend to live? Close examination will discover many things which have been amiss in the time past, and the discovery of those fatal by-paths should be a sufficient inducement to shun them, and this calls for a holy resolution so to do. Thus we find the psalmist resolving to take heed unto his ways that he might

*might not offend.** But then, remember, there must be a taking hold of divine strength or our resolutions will be like a thread when it is touched by the fire. Through Christ strengthening me, I can do all things; but, truly, of myself I can do nothing. No; I must be strengthened by his Spirit's might in the inner man, so shall I prevail, and be more than conqueror through him who loved me. We see in that admirable song of thanksgiving, the eighteenth psalm, all the victories which the psalmist had obtained, the honour is entirely ascribed to the living God. Hence he compounds a bright assemblage of epithets taken from the different weapons of war, and applies them to his Almighty Helper. *The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength in whom I trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

Thus will glory be given to whom it is justly due, and that is to Jacob's mighty God. Indeed we are sufficiently apprized of that in the case of Israel of old. For though they had just taken Jericho, and, flushed with victory, marched to Ai, with very great confidence; but sin, prevarication, having crept in among them, Jehovah was displeased, and he drew back his helping hand; and what was the consequence? they were smitten and fled from before the men of Ai: *Wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water.* † The true image of ourselves. And on the other hand, what could withstand them when the Lord was on their side? Nothing. Nations and kingdoms gathering together were nothing, he who sitteth in the heavens laughed them to scorn; the Lord had them in derision. Such a series of conquests I defy any other history for exhibiting as we meet with in the tenth chapter of

* Psalm xxxix. 1. † Joshua viii. 5.

Joshua: the different kingdoms were taken as soon, almost, as the army could march to them, and the whole mystery is unfolded in the forty-second verse, viz. *Because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel.* Thus let Israel's God be my God and through him I shall prevail; yea I shall overcome all by the blood of the Lamb.

From hence we see the exceeding great privileges of the gospel dispensation. How cheap, simple and easy are the ordinances? And how well are they calculated to express their great ends and designs? What a yoke of trouble and expence were the rites and ceremonies under the law? A yoke which neither we nor they could bear. † But indeed their end is fully accomplished, the great fulfiller of all the types having appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, the glorious Sun of Righteousness being risen all those clouds are for ever dispersed.

We have great reason to bless God for the reformation, though not so perfect as one could wish, yet many superstitious fopperies are abolished, and among the rest the abominable fiction of transubstantiation, by which the God of heaven was horribly insulted, and the simple people shamefully imposed upon; and for the denying of which idolatry many perished in the flames. But still, like the death of some destructive monster, whose vile carcase leaves an ill savour in the country round; so, though the beast of transubstantiation be slain, yet there is the dead carcase of consubstantiation, the image of the beast, if possible a more unintelligible jargon than the other, left behind. I have sometimes been asked, what is consubstantiation? But I really could never tell.—I can tell what they say it is; but if terms admit of no rational ideas it is hard to say

what they mean. Nearly related to this is the formality of consecration, and by laying hands on the elements, and muttering a few words over them, we are taught to believe that some degree of holiness is communicated to the bread and wine, yea though the consecrator is a very unholy man. Surely this is leaving the word of God to follow the traditions of men: I can find nothing of this consecration of bread and wine in the new testament; nor does it appear that such a consecration, or consecrator were necessary to give a validity to the Lord's Supper. It is generally believed that the primitive christians communicated every day, and that is a sufficient proof to me that the ordinance did not require the presence of ministers, for I apprehend there were not such numbers as to be in every place where believers were. Wherever a number of pious souls were met together, who were admitted as members of the church by baptism, no doubt but there were persons among them who could ask the divine benediction upon the ordinance, as they had the promise of their Saviour to be in the midst, and thus eat and drink in remembrance of their dying Lord, and did by faith discern their Saviour's body broken for them. No doubt but when ministers were present they would take the lead in that, as well as other parts of worship; but I still call upon any man to prove from scripture that their presence was absolutely necessary to give validity to the ordinance. I say, let them prove it that can from the new testament. As for other legends, let them be called apostolic canons, or epistles, or writings of fathers, I think we should be careful how we set them up in opposition to the word of God.

Should not care be taken who are admitted to that

that divine means? And can that be done without knowing the state of the communicants? I apprehend not. This is yet attended unto in the church of Scotland, nay, and I believe in all the protestant churches abroad; yea something of the kind is in the church of Rome; only, it is miserably perverted, by making it into an auricular confession, and the receiving priestly absolution. There discipline is turned into a horrid abuse. But the right use should be maintained, and the abuse avoided. At any rate persons should have tolerable apprehensions of the thing; which cannot be expected without instruction and discipline, and they ought to be regular in their lives. Less than this cannot be dispensed with upon the principles of the word of God. To help in the former case a little, has been the design in the preceding discourse, what success it may have, the hearers, and time must make manifest.

Lastly, As we shall ere long be judged ourselves, it becometh us to be very serious in divine things, and more especially in those solemnities in which we profess confidence in a dying Saviour, and likewise avow ourselves to be devoted unto him. *Let a man, that is every man, examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* Let these memorials of a bleeding Saviour, lead the sinner unto him, and confirm his faith in him daily; let it excite gratitude and thanksgiving from day to day; so that he may do this in remembrance of his death and passion till he is raised from this dark abode to view, in the realms of unclouded bliss, his once crucified, but now exalted Saviour, world without end. Amen. **12 NO 61**

FINIS.

Just published, by T. Taylor, 15 Sermons on the MILLENNIUM,
&c. Price 3s. sewed in blue paper.